

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as currently amended and in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4-20, and 23-38 are currently active in this case. Claims 2, 3, 21, and 22 have been canceled, and Claims 1, 4-20, 23-30, and 32-37 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Abstract was objected to; Claims 1-30 and 32-37 were objected to; Claims 1 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,263,178 to Takeyama et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,075,547 to Takeuchi and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0037178 to Saitoh et al.; and Claims 2 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takeyama et al. in view of Takeuchi and Saitoh et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,222,566 to Takeyama et al.

Claims 3-19 and 22-38 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In response to the indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 20 to include the limitations of Claims 2 and 3 and 21 and 22, respectively.

In response to the objection to the Abstract, the Abstract has been rewritten in narrative form and includes fewer than 150 words. Consequently, no further objection to the Abstract is anticipated.

In response to the claim objections, the claims have been amended consistent with the recommendations made in the Office Action. Consequently, no further objections to the claims are anticipated.

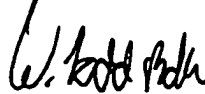
In view of the foregoing, no further issues are believed to remain. An early and

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favorable action is therefore respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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